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Central Government and Secession

Tyler Zuch

Cedarville University, tylerzuch@cedarville.edu

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**“Central Governments and Secession: An Analysis of the Effectiveness
of Government Responses to Domestic Secessionist Movements”**

Senior Thesis Research Paper

Tyler Zuch

Research in Political Science

Dr. Duerr

Cedarville University

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Introduction

Throughout history, governments and countries have risen and fallen. Some, however, have carried on through the years, but look very different from when they existed in previous times. Rulers and leaders have utilized many responses to combat various rebellions and secessionist movements. These responses range from violent and/or political repression, devolution, simply declaring secession unconstitutional or illegal, and various economic concessions/incentives.

In order to answer the question, “What is the most effective response that a modern, democratic government can use against a secessionist movement?” one needs to look at all the major options that have been used in modern history in developed, democratic Europe and North America. But one also needs to observe the impact method used has had on the country and how it affected that country’s society. While some scholars would consider the option undemocratic, one would have little choice after researching the issue but to say that the declaration of a secessionist movement is unconstitutional/illegal is the best response a modern, democratic government can use.

Literature Review

Ever since its creation, mankind has tended to drift away or disdain authority. People have sought to take matters into their own hands and disobey those above them when they perceive such actions to suit themselves best. From the Garden of Eden to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum,¹ one can see how some people will, for whatever the reason, seek to leave whatever government authority is in place and continue on their own. It is in Man’s nature

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-29270441>

to think that he can best govern and lead himself. While many people have written about this and the Nature of Man, few have written about what the governing authority, national governments in this case, could and should do to keep those under its place. The sources that are out there, talk about the approaches that governments have taken and the factors that have caused the secessionist movements in the first place. Rarely have there been scholarly works done from the point of view of the government, rather than the popular, and sometimes romantic, viewpoint of the people.

First, a clear definition must be used to define the topic of secession. Secession is defined by leading secession scholar, Allen Buchanan, as an attempt by a region/group within a country to break away from the current governing body/system and form their own, independent country.² Now, one must look at the options that governments have historically used to keep a region under its control over time. These options include, but are not limited to, violent suppression, devolution, ignoring the problem, and declaring the secession attempt illegal/unconstitutional. The approach that governments have elected to use for most of human history has been a violent suppression of any rebellion/secessionist movements. These responses have been harsh and bloody, often with the deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of people. This approach was advised and encouraged by an Italian, Renaissance Era philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli, in a letter to the leader of Florence advised him to brutally crush the rebellion and trouble makers to ensure the all-important survival of the state.³ While Machiavelli does not discuss secession directly, he does talk about rebellion. Machiavelli advises that rebellion should be crushed heavily when it breaks out and the leaders need to be silenced by any means necessary. However, he also talks about the different ways in which the leader needs to

² <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/secession/>

³ Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Penguin Classics, 2009

conduct himself so that a region, even a conquered one, would not feel the need to rebel. He should be generous, fair and never behave in a way that would anger a city/region. But if kindness is not enough, Machiavelli says that a leader should be feared in the absence of love so the people know that rebellion would be dealt with heavily.

Jumping forward to a later period in history, Enlightenment philosopher, Thomas Hobbes states in his book *The Leviathan* that a massive government and/or strong institutions were needed to ensure the survival of the state, which, according to Hobbes, is the most important thing to be preserved by any and all means necessary. When a state breaks apart, anarchy will ensue and drive humanity into chaos and Hobbes believes this to be the worst fate mankind could face. Hobbes is one of the last philosophers to take this approach as the grand majority Enlightenment thinkers, and thinkers since then, have all stated that the people have a right to secede. It was these thinkers and philosophers like them that have the most influence in the modern, developed world. In fact, there are a number of modern scholars who think that a brutal response to secession only brings resentment and foreign and domestic condemnation. Andrew Foxall⁴ and Mariya Yevsyukova⁵ look at Putin's attempts to quell secession sentiments and factions in the Russian Republic of Chechnya. They describe that his multiple attempts to stomp out resistance and secessionists that have turned violent due to Russia's tactics have failed to land permanent and concrete peace. While they acknowledge that Putin's approach has given him effective control of all the sites of power and strategic positions within Chechnya, they also point out that separatist sentiment is still as strong as ever, according to the aforementioned authors, and that the military does not and really cannot maintain control in the countryside. Pro-democratic and populists will point to this example to show that a forceful approach to the issue

⁴ Foxall, Andrew. "Beyond Ukraine, Russia Is Already At War."

⁵ http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/full_text_search/AllCRCDocs/95-5.htm

does not solve the issue and will lead to a high political and humanitarian cost to the ruling government.

Since the Enlightenment Era and the rise of democracy, the idea that a government, particularly a democratic one, should brutally put down a secessionist movement became philosophical heresy. Scholars, like Lee C. Buchheit, now argue that the people are what make a government, and therefore have the right to break away from that government if they so choose.⁶ Another scholar and author that agrees with this point of view. Allen Buchanan, in his book *Theories of Secession*,⁷ analyzes a number of interesting issues about secession. He discusses why secessionist movements might arise, what are some underlying causes and social factors, and when a group/region/people have a right to secede from the current state/government. He also advocates that secession should be a last resort after a group/region suffers many injustices in society and that those injustices are ignored and left unchecked. He advocates strict adherents to all parties to international law and that both sides settle disputes peacefully and that violence be avoided. However, in the end, when a government refuses to acknowledge the right of region to secede when the cause is just, the people have a right to disobey the central government and to try more aggressive measures for their freedom, though this is a regrettable course of action. In another book by Buchanan, *Human Rights, Legitimacy, and the Use of Force*,⁸ often attacks the notion of realism in his book and says that a country is obligated to abide by the wishes of the state and that it cannot do whatever it wants even if it is necessary. He believes the government needs to ensure everyone with human rights and that the government has no right to infringe upon those rights no matter the cost. One can imply that this means that he would support

⁶ Buchheit, Lee C. *Secession: "The Legitimacy of Self-determination"*

⁷ Buchanan, Allen. *"Theories of Secession."*

⁸ Buchanan, Allen E. *"Human Rights, Legitimacy, and the Use of Force"*

negotiations with a secessionist movement, but would not try to stop the region should it want to leave. So while these authors support the notion of secession, they really do not believe the government should prevent the people from leaving, though they still provide interesting and thought-provoking points as to governments and their relationship with their people. They are also useful to include because they provide a stark contrast to the views of Machiavelli and Hobbes.

One democratic approach that governments have elected to take that has proven to be somewhat effective in modern times is devolution. Devolution is the decentralization of power and granting certain powers and privileges to lower levels of governments such as states, regions, provinces, or other localities. Basically, the federal government is voluntarily giving up some power. When countries do this for regions that have high secessionist sentiments, they are hoping that this will placate the locals with the notion that they have to answer to the federal government less and the government that is closest to them has more power. While this is a fairly new process, it has had quite a bit of short term success. Devolution has assuaged some secessionist concerns in numerous cases in Europe, but the most well known and most recent of these cases are what will be studied and analyzed. These cases are Scotland in the UK and Quebec in Canada. Devolution in Scotland and Quebec successfully kept the regions within their respective countries and the promise of more devolution to Scotland was what many considered to be the determining factor that led the Scottish people to vote to stay in the United Kingdom. It is a peaceful and a fairly reasonable approach for government to dealing with a restive region. The problem is that no one knows how this approach will work long-term. John Major, former Conservative Prime Minister of the UK, was quoted that devolution was a “Trojan Horse” to

secession which will be inevitable at a later time.⁹ A number of scholars have recently begun to study this notion. Dawn Brancati, a professor of political science from Washington University, wrote an article stating that after observing over thirty different democracies devolution works in the short term, but may indeed cause long term consequences as it only strengthens a region's separate identity.¹⁰

Another well-known authority on secessionist and global politics, Richard Bird, wrote a paper with scholars François Vaillancourt and Roy-Cesar Édison that stated that it is too early to decide on a definitive answer and want to wait and see how current events play out, but that concerns about secession after devolution could definitely be a possibility in the future.¹¹ They looked at the most recent and most likely candidates for a possible secessionist attempt within the country (Belgium, Spain, Canada, and the UK) and see what the current situation is in the country. However, at least one scholar, Montserrat Guibernau, states that these concerns are not necessarily doomed to come true in her article.¹² Her article concludes by examining the reasons which might contribute to replacing separatist demands with a desire for greater devolution. She states that "devolution does not tend to foster secession, that is, devolution does not usually challenge the integrity of the nation-state's boundaries." She means that while region identity is strengthened, it does not mean that national identity is not weakened/compromised in the process.

⁹ Duerr, Glen. "Britain after Blair" Page 16. British Politics Group Conference. Chicago, IL, Wednesday, August 29, 2007.

¹⁰ Brancati, Dawn. "Decentralization: Fueling The Fire Or Dampening The Flames Of Ethnic Conflict And Secessionism?" *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 651-85.

¹¹ Bird, Richard, François Vaillancourt, and Édison Roy-Cesar. "Is Decentralization "Glue" or "Solvent" for National Unity?" 2010.

¹² Guibernau, Montserrat. "National Identity, Devolution and Secession in Canada, Britain and Spain*." *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 1 (2006): 51-76

Lastly on the topic of devolution, a quantitative study was undertaken by Ian Lustick, Dan Miodownik, and Roy Eidelson to determine how devolution affects sentiments within a local population that is experiencing a wave of secessionist sentiment.¹³ They looked at and analyzed surveys and studies of the people in different regions around the world and how they reacted when the government agreed to devolve power. The researchers discovered that while repression does decrease the chance of secession, it increases secessionist activity from a disgruntled populace (this could be reduced as well, but only if the government was willing to invest a great deal of resources and increased the repressive bureaucracy in the region). The simulations also show that when devolution is employed, secession chances increase, but secessionist activity decreases in its ferocity. It should be noted that while all three of the authors agreed that devolution has an effect on a populace, they all disagree as to the extent. That being said, they all stated that there simply needs to be more time of observation within a country in order to answer their original question. So while there is no definitive answer to how affective devolution is in keeping the country together in the long run, everyone agrees that it is a good short term solution, though a government should certainly not limit the scope of their goals to simply a short term “Band-Aid” and not an effective, long-term solution.

Another less confrontational approach, but possibly more frustrating, is the notion to simply ignore the matter by declaring secession illegal and leaving the matter there. The case that obviously comes to mind is the case of Catalonia in Spain as well as several other regions in that country as well. In Spain’s constitution, it is illegal for regions/autonomous communities in Spain to secede from the Madrid based government. In exchange, the states received a rather large amount of autonomy and powers, for a country in Europe at least, granted to them by the

¹³ Lustick, Ian S., Dan Miodownik, and Roy J. Eidelson. "Secessionism in Multicultural States: Does Sharing Power Prevent or Encourage It?" *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 209-29

central government. While this has proven effective in terms of keeping the country together and no ground has been given or lost, the people of Catalonia have remained unreconciled. They refuse to call themselves Spanish over Catalanian and one might even say that secessionist sentiment remains as strong as ever. The place that this can be seen the most is at a soccer game between the Catalonia based team of Barcelona vs. Real Madrid.¹⁴ If one were to watch a game that was hosted by the former, one might indeed appear to be in a completely separate, not an outright anti-Spain country. The Catalonians pride themselves on having a distinct language, culture, and society that is different from those of the rest of Spain. They have even held semi-official independence referendums that have ultimately proven fruitless because the Madrid government does not recognize it as credible nor legal. So while secessionist sentiment seems to be as high as ever, if not higher than ever, the situation remains unchanged and something should indeed be said about that fact.

One area that needs to be discussed about this is what Christians have said on this matter in the past. While few Christian thinkers have talked about secession in particular, they have discussed governments and how they should deal with rebellion, particularly violent rebellion. Martin Luther, in his 45th Vol., states that those who rebel are subject to discipline by the governing authority, whom God has placed there to be His agent of wrath and justice on Earth. The princes of Germany, upon hearing this, then proceeded to crush the German Peasants' Rebellion of 1525, which ended with a negotiated agreement with rebel leaders.¹⁵ While this rebellion was not an attempt at regional secession, it does provide an interesting point of view on how much power and strength a government righteously wields, even if it must wield that power against its own people. There have been many others in the Christian realm to comment on the

¹⁴ Duerr, Dr. Glen. "Soccer and Secession." Class Lecture, Sports and Politics from Cedarville University

¹⁵ Thomas F. Sea. *The German Princes' Responses to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525*

power and extent of government control/conduct, such as British Reformer William Tyndale, Paul (primarily in Romans), and even Jesus Himself. Something they all have in common is that God has put a government in place for a reason, but where the confusion comes in the modern world, is how to interpret specific passages and works, in the Bible and otherwise.

In conclusion, while there has been a considerable amount of scholarly work done on the topic of secession, very little recent scholarly activity or research has been done that shows what a government can or should do to be the most effective in keeping the country. Furthermore, even less has been done to compare properly the different approaches together to see if one method is better than the other. Granted, one would need to treat each case as unique, taking into account culture, society, history, laws, and mannerisms in order to make an accurate assessment of the options that is at a government's disposal when faced with a secessionist movement within their country. Regardless which option is taken, it is vitally important to remember that these rebellious citizens are still people with legitimate needs and concerns that is a government's duty to see to and address. Also, the said government should always be mindful of exactly all the power it wields and the damage and harm it could do. If a government is kind and mindful of the needs of its people, which even the notorious realist Machiavelli says is necessary for a government to do, there may even be a great reduction in people wanting to leave. Still, all options need to be looked at and evaluated to see which would be the best option to keep a country together.

Methods:

DEVOLUTION AND ECONOMIC INCENTIVES METHOD

One of the most common methods of placating a restive region of a country to devolve political/governing power to the local governments. Devolution, as already stated, is defined as “the transfer of power to a lower level of government.”¹⁶ Also, when devolution is used, in most cases, additional economic incentives are given to the region as well. These incentives include but are not limited to increased welfare support, free education, decreased taxation rates, and more funds for infrastructure and healthcare. In most democracies, this is the approach most government use to calm and satisfy a region that is not happy under the central government. It seen by the global community as benevolent and generous rather than heavy-handed and repressive. However, the long-term effects of devolution have been contested by many experts, even though many others say that this is the best course of action for a government to utilize.

First, one must look at it in a historical context in which the use and effectiveness of devolution can be seen. Devolution can be seen a few times throughout ancient history, even among the old Roman Empire. When Rome conquered a new territory, they would leave a governor in place to rule in the name of the emperor. Even though this governor was still a servant to Rome, he was given an extraordinary amount of power so that he could govern each territory to their own needs and to enforce several laws that Rome decreed needed to be enforced throughout the empire. However, aside from a few such laws and a certain amount of taxes be sent to the capitol every year, the governor was free to govern the territories and provinces as he saw fit. Rome would allow the people to maintain their ways of life, their religions, and even their kings at some point. This worked well for the Romans for a time. It kept the people happy

¹⁶ Kelleher, Christine A. and Yackee, Susan Webb. “*An Empirical Assessment of Devolution's Policy Impact*”

and content for a number of years. But as can be seen throughout the history of the empire, the devolution allowed many of the conquered areas to maintain their national and cultural identities. This led to revolts among the people groups of the empire, including the Iceni in Britannia (AD 60) and the Jews in Judea (AD 66). Both of these rebellions were fuelled by a nationalist sentiment that survived initial conquest and were only put down due to the might of the Roman army. While not exactly the kind of devolution that is to be seen in the modern world, the Roman example provides an interesting insight as to the origins of the idea of that particular method of placating a region. Now to analyze modern cases in the developed, democratic, Western world. There are two case studies that one should observe and analyze how devolution has helped and/or hard the situation within the region.

The first case study that will be reviewed and analyzed is the attempt of secession in Quebec in Canada in 1980 and 1995. Quebec was colonized by the French in 1608. The English would settle the Eastern portions of the country as well as the Hudson Bay area. While the English and the French would continuously fight over the Great Lakes region of the continent, the French political and colonial power base remained in Quebec. This changed when the British invaded Quebec during the 7 Years War (or the French and Indian War in North America).¹⁷ The British army under General Wolfe launched an attack on Quebec City which was being defended by the French General Montcalm. The two armies battled on the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and the British won the day. The battle basically signified the end of the 7 Years War in North America and left Quebec under control of the British Empire. It did not take long, however, for the differences of the people of Quebec to fester into something more volatile.

¹⁷ "French and Indian War/Seven Years' War, 1754–63 - 1750–1775." <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/french-indian-war>.

The people of Quebec maintained their own separate identity from the rest of British held Canada and continued on in their French manners, customs, and even language and they still do to the current day. In 1837, the people of Quebec rebelled against the British, the group “*Les Patriotes*,” but were hastily crushed. In his investigation for the Crown, Lord Durham submitted *Lord Durham’s Report*, in which he records the rebellion and causes of the unrest. He provided suggestions in which to placate the people so that they might be ingratiated into the country a little bit better.¹⁸ In this report, he suggested increased immigration from Britain to Canada, the combination of Upper and Lower Canada into a single body, and also that certain rights and freedoms granted due to the 1774 Quebec Act be rescinded. While much of these recommendations were realized under the 1840 Act of Union, the people of Quebec were able to maintain a vastly different culture to that of the rest of Canada to present day. Even appeasement attempts during the congregations of delegates from the respective provinces of Canada were not enough to satisfy those of the province of Quebec as they did not feel that it properly recognized the cultural uniqueness and separation from that of the rest of the country.¹⁹

The attitude of the people of Quebec did not change for the passing decades, even after Canada was declared independent of the UK in 1867, though no great insurrection was mounted, the feelings of separation and the stark differences between the two cultures did not go away. While the national sentiments were not fomenting to the point of secession, the feeling of separation was there, hiding underneath the surface of everyday society. This all changed when Charles de Gaulle came and gave a speech to the people of Quebec on July 24, 1967. To the crowd in Montreal, the then president of France, shouted “*Vive le Québec libre*”²⁰ which

¹⁸ “*Durham Report*.” The Canadian Encyclopedia.

¹⁹ Duerr, Glen. “*Understanding Canada’s Origins*.”

²⁰ De Gaulle, Charles. “*CBC Digital Archives - Language & Culture General - ‘Vive Le Québec Libre!’*”

translates into “long live a free Quebec.” As one can imagine this speech caused a great deal of controversy in Canada and the rest of the Western world, but the people of Quebec were extremely receptive to those words, which have since become the rallying cry for many Quebec nationalists.

It did not take long for these nationalists to form their own political parties which would begin to press for greater powers and economic benefits to be transferred to Quebec from the central Canadian government in Ottawa. In 1968, less than a full year after President De Gaulle gave his famous, or infamous, speech to the crowd in Montreal, the Parti Québécois was formed to contest for power in the local/provincial level government in Quebec. They would be elected only 8 years after formation to sweeping control of the Quebec government and immediately began making plans and nationalist statements that resonated on the national and international level.

In 1980, they orchestrated an independence referendum for the people to vote to become a free and independent nation. The vote was 59.5% voted "No" to proceeding with sovereignty negotiations.²¹ However, in order to satisfy the large minority of Quebec’s citizens who wanted to proceed with sovereignty/independence negotiations, the Canadian government had offered some reforms to classify Quebec as a “distinct society” within Canada as well as other unspecified reforms of political power and economic protections. The negotiations for these was known as the Meech Lake Accord of 1987. However, the delegates from Canada did not like the terms, deeming that they were treating Quebec too specially, while the PQ did not feel like the Accord went far enough to protect them. Support for the negotiations failed and the 1990 deadline was reached and nothing came of the governments promise of reform.

²¹ CBC Digital Archives. “*Charting the Future: Canada's New Constitution - The 1980 Quebec Referendum.*”

This failure led to the rise of the Bloc Quebecois in 1991 to run on the national level of government to represent the Quebec nationalists in Ottawa. They would go on to serve as the official opposition from 1993-97 in the national government.²² However, due to the lack of progress made at the Meech Lake Accord, anger and nationalist sentiment once again flared up in Quebec and the government there held another independence referendum in 1995, just 15 years after they voted on this issue the first time. This referendum failed, but only by a very slim margin. 49.4% voted in favor for independence/sovereignty agreement.²³ Quebec had almost left Canada and the Canadian government learned their lesson and swiftly began to pass reform and legislation to appease the Quebec nationalists.

In response to the results, the Canadian government continued appeasement policies, enhancing Quebec's political standing, giving them more economics incentives, and more healthcare. Of Canada's 338 Parliamentary seats in the House of Commons, 78 of those seats belong to Quebec, the second-most by far of all the provinces. Some of those seats were given to Quebec to give them the feeling that they had proper representation and fair say in national affairs/matters. However, more protest comes from Quebec's allotment of senatorial seats. In Canada's Senate, there are 105 seats and Quebec has been given 24, the same as Ontario. This is contentious because in terms of population per senator, Quebec's population per senator is roughly 3/5 that of Ontario and even more severely disproportionate that those of other provinces. In terms of economic benefits Quebec gave the Canadian a net tax return during the 2014-2015 fiscal of -\$5.4 billion USD.²⁴ This is, by far, a greater monetary disparity than all

²² Duerr, Glen. "*Quebec*." Class Lecture, History and Politics of Great Britain and Canada, Cedarville, January 21, 2015.

²³ "*Quebec Vote Is 'a Wake up Call*." CNN. October 31, 1995.

²⁴ Duerr, Glen. "*Discussion/Contemporary Canadian Politics*." Class Lecture, History and Politics of Great Britain and Canada, Cedarville, February 13, 2015.

other negative net return provinces combined. It has also angered many Canadians in other parts of the country, particularly in the West. To make matters even worse, the Quebec people still are not happy and would like further monetary benefits as well as increased constitutional recognition of their “special” status as a unique and separate people group/culture and the protections thereby provided.

So how does the case of Quebec apply to the notion that giving devolution/economic incentives to restive regions are not a preferable method to stop secessionist sentiment? One would have to look at a variety of issues that would arise from and also to at the rest of the country. First, one has to look at the culture’s expression/imprint on daily life in Quebec. Both separatist/nationalist parties are still in existence and have a strong and loyal level of support. The PQ is still a powerful force in Quebec politics and often run the provincial government or are at least a large opposition party. This signifies that the people of the region still want the nationalist party to implement policies that continue to keep them separate from the rest of the country. Indeed, their culture still remains so vastly different. Most of the people there speak French rather than English, or at least refuse to speak the latter. Also the road signs in most of the province have French as the main/central language, located primarily in Montreal. One also needs to look at the rest of the country. A politician from the Western provinces, Preston Manning, had actually stated that he would work to kick Quebec out of Canada. A poll was taken in 2012 that showed that a quarter of Canadians surveyed would kick Quebec out of the country.²⁵ This is because of the massive disparity of welfare, healthcare, and economic benefits that are given to them even though the central government only receives a fraction of that

²⁵ Radia, Andy. "A Quarter of Canadians Would Vote to Kick Quebec out of Confederation: Survey." Yahoo News Canada.

amount in revenue from Quebec.²⁶ This kind of inequality will only breed resentment throughout the country while it fails to remove the sense of nationalism and separation in the restive region, as can be seen in Quebec to the present day.

The second case study, the most recent one, is the recent situation of Scotland within the United Kingdom. On September 18, 2014, Scotland held a national referendum for its citizens to decide whether or not they wanted to become a country, independent of the UK. In a 45 to 55 vote, the people decided in favor of remaining within the current union.²⁷ This result was due to a number of factors, some economic, social, and political. One of the main political reasons for the Scottish people to want to stay in the UK is largely because of the promised devolution of governing powers to Scotland from the national government that Prime Minister David Cameron promised would be given to the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, in Edinburgh should the people vote to remain within the union. In order to understand the gravity of the situation, one needs to take at least a quick look at Scotland's history and how they entered the United Kingdom in the first place.

The people of Scotland have, for most of their history, always been a separate people from their neighbors to the South. The Romans never ventured far into the North of Scotland because the people there were deemed to be ruthless to be conquered and ruled, even by the might of Rome. They even built a massive wall to demarcate the border with the land. The first serious invasion of Scotland came in the 13th century under Edward I.²⁸ Ever since then, up until 1707, the people of England and Scotland were almost always in a state of conflict, either militarily or politically. In 1707, however, this all changed. Scotland, bankrupted by various colonial

²⁶ Robson, John. "*Quebec Proves That Not All Is Equal in Canada's Equalization Payment Program.*"

²⁷ "*Scottish Independence Referendum - Results.*" - BBC News. September 19, 2014.

²⁸ "*The Wars of Independence.*" BBC News. Accessed March 19, 2015.

ventures, corruption, and a depressed economy could not maintain its own governance. It needed outside assistance and after intense negotiations with England, Scotland became a member of Great Britain and would receive seats within the parliament based in London.²⁹ However, throughout its history since the union, Scotland and her people remained very distinct from the other British nations. They, while speaking the same language, had a very distinct accent native solely to Scotland. The people also maintained their Scottish customs, mannerism, and cultural norms. All of these social distinctions added up was bound to reach a boiling point. Soon, the desire for Scotland to be independent among the people of that country grew and grew.

In 1934, the SNP (Scottish National Party) was formed and would go on to win their first seat in a by-election in 1967. The group advocated for greater power and freedom be given to Scotland, though independence was, and still is, their ultimate goal. In order to appease the Scottish people, the British parliament passed the Scotland Act of 1978 which officially set up a referendum for a parliament for Scotland comprised of elected individuals in Scotland to run various administrative tasks and duties, albeit in a very limited sense. However, due to a loophole in the law that tied results to voter turnout, the law did not meet the required number of votes in a referendum and the Scottish Assembly was not implemented. This led the SNP to withdraw from its alliance with Labour in the British Parliament, which led to a vote of no confidence and thereafter a new, Conservative government took over. The situation did not change for Scotland until 1997 when another pre-legislation referendum was held in Scotland demanding devolution of power be handed down to a Scottish Assembly/Parliament. This time, the voter turnout and results met the requirements with every district in Scotland voting in favor of devolution. Therefore, in 1998, the British government in London approved and set a

²⁹ Macinnes, Allan I. "Acts of Union: The Creation of the United Kingdom." BBC News. Accessed March 19, 2015.

Parliament in Scotland with very limited power in Edinburgh, but this was still significant to the Scottish people. Since then, various amendments have been added to the original 1998 Act and the power of Scottish Parliament has grown. That power will be expected to grow even more with the negative result of the Scottish Independence Referendum as promised by Prime Minister David Cameron in exchange for Scotland staying within the union.

The Scottish nationalist sentiment that had been building up since the initial devolution all came to bear at the 2014 independence referendum that was held on September 18, 2014. This vote for independence came about by the Scottish Parliament who had been given the power by the central government through devolution to draft and pass such legislation.³⁰ The bill, the Edinburgh Agreement, was then signed by UK Prime Minister Cameron and First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond on October 15, 2012. Both sides campaigned hard during the near two years they had until the elections with both sides making their cases. The leaders of the three major parties on the national level went to Scotland to plead with the people not to withdraw from the union.³¹ Prime Minister Cameron promised that he would further devolve power to the Scottish Parliament so that they would have even more control of local affairs so that the government in London would further reduce its role in Scotland. These promises were believed to have played a large role come Election Day as 55% percent of the voters decided to stay within the United Kingdom. The Nationalists and the SNP recognized these results and said they would work with the British government on the promise of further devolution, though they clearly were not happy. Scotland narrowly avoided leaving the UK and likelihood of another independence referendum at a later time still looks like a very real possibility as the SNP is set to very well in the upcoming 2015 national elections, as they are projected to win around 56 of

³⁰ "Scottish Independence Referendum (Archived)." Scottish Independence Referendum.

³¹ "Leaders Make Scotland 'No' Vote Plea." BBC News. September 10, 2014.

Scotland's 59 parliamentary seats.³² This just goes to show that nationalist sentiment is still running extremely high.

So, have devolution and economic incentives worked for the United Kingdom in its dealings with Scotland? If one were to review the situation, between the three referendums, nearly half of the people of Scotland have wanted greater autonomy/independence. The people still talk differently than their English neighbors/partners, they have different values and traditions, and their politics are also growing increasingly pro-Scotland and less pro-UK. For much of its history, the United Kingdom has been governed by Conservative administrations in London, whereas the people of Scotland almost always vote Labour in recent history, though they used to vote Conservative. Aside from the issue of nationalism, the SNP is very nearly a mirror of the Labour party, supporting and touting many of the same policies and ideological values. It is quite clear that the people of Scotland have remained very distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom and the 300+ years of union have failed to rid Scotland of its nationalism and desire for independence. Also, all of this devolution of powers and increase in economic and welfare/healthcare benefits going to Scotland only angers many of the people in England, where much, if not most, of this taxpayer money comes from. One such benefit is that higher education is completely free in Scotland, paid for in part by the British government, with some help from the local government(s). In addition to that, education policies have been devolved to the Scottish government so that they control how the schools should be run.³³ In addition to all of this, Scotland has a fairly high unemployment rate and a great deal more gets spent in Scotland

³² Mullin, John. "Election 2015: Scotland Decides Again - but This Time for Us All." *The Independent*. March 15, 2015.

³³ "Sturgeon: No Tuition Fees Ever." *BBC News*. September 3, 2014.

in relation to unemployment benefits than in most other parts of the UK.³⁴ So with all of the clamoring that Scotland makes, they do receive a great deal of power and money from the central government, which does tend to breed resentment among other groups within the country. As mentioned earlier, PM Cameron has promised to devolve more power as a gesture and compromise to the Scottish people in exchange for the “No vote” in the independence referendum. Some of these powers will also include the power to tax.

So how effective are devolution and economic benefits in quieting a restive region? For starters, one can observe that devolution, economic benefits and the promises of greater autonomy have worked in the short term, but the people maintain a separate national identity. In the case of Scotland, with the continued devolution of powers, including the forthcoming taxation powers, they become closer and closer to becoming a de facto autonomous country that is only under the UK’s control on paper. This is why a former British prime minister, John Major, said that devolution is a “Trojan Horse” to independence. It shows the people of that region that they can run their own country without outside help and may even be better off without interference in local affairs, however accurate or not that belief may be. Also, as can be seen in Quebec and Scotland, when the government starts giving more to the province/territory, the people of that region will start to demand more and more, but will never be completely satisfied. While the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom in maintaining the regions within the country, they put a strain on the rest of the country, and that breeds resentment and sometimes fear from the rest of the people.³⁵ It spreads a feeling of inequality and unfairness among the people that they are getting less while their neighbors who are not even of the same

³⁴ Flanders, Stephanie. "Scotland: A Case of Give and Take." BBC News. January 9, 2012.

³⁵ Watson, Leon. "English Tourists 'cancel Trips to Scotland Because of Ill-feeling'" The Telegraph. September 18, 2014.

culture are getting more and more money and political power. While the scenarios in Quebec and Scotland did prevent the regions from leaving the countries, it remains to be seen if it stays that way. Both regions still have large populations of nationalists who want nothing more than to be independent and will not stop until they achieve that goal, though it appears that both of the regions appear to be content for the time being.

GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

The second method that is open to governments is referred to as the “Suppression by Violence Method.” This is when a government uses violence, harmful tactics, and forceful means to suppress an attempt for secession. This is the oldest and most widely used form of preventing rebellion/independence in a restive region within the country. Every kingdom and empire in the ancient world used this, including Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece/Macedonian Empire, Rome, etc. While the exact approaches to rebellions within the regions may differ, they all used violence to quell unrest in the various parts of their histories. While some attempts at peaceful reconciliation may have taken place in the old empires, the violent method was almost always used in the face of an uprising. Even when the world (primarily Europe) started to develop after the Roman Empire, violence was still the preferred choice of governments in dealing with restive populations within countries and empires.

Political thinkers throughout post-Roman time, while differing in extent and magnitude, still supported and wrote the idea of dealing with troublemakers. As mentioned before, Machiavelli believed in a strong and forceful government. However, he was probably one of the first political thinkers to bring a sophistication to the use of power by a government. He recognized that a government needed to be strong and said that it must respond accordingly to a

rebellion, but also smart enough to pursue policies that would avoid the situation altogether. Thomas Hobbes published a book entitled *The Leviathan* in 1651 in England. In this book he stated that the survival of the state/government is of the utmost importance and that everything must be done to prevent chaos, one of the worst fates that could befall a country/mankind in general. He writes that the government needed to keep the order by any means necessary to maintain itself and to prevent the country falling apart due to Man's violent and troublesome nature. Rebellion needed to be crushed and troublemakers, just like Machiavelli believed, needed to be found out and silenced. But exactly how effective is this violent method in a modern, democratic society and an increasingly globalized world focused on freedom and human rights? One would have to look at two case studies and see for themselves the aftermath of this approach.

The first case that will be looked at is the case of Great Britain in Ireland. The English first had theoretical control over Ireland in 1500, though they only had firm control in the area known as "The Pale," which includes Dublin and the surrounding countryside. It was not until Henry VIII came to power when the English started to take firmer control of the island. It was in this time when the Irish people, resentful of a foreign people exerting extensive control over them, started to grow restless and revolt. No matter what they did, however, they kept getting crushed, especially when the English, under Cromwell, swept over the rebellious territory and removed resistance. The English even tried to ban the traditional Irish language from being spoken and did their best to Anglicize the populace to try to remove cultural factors from causing so great a conflict and resentment.³⁶ In addition to these methods, the British government made significant to intermingle much of the people to try to water down the Irish population and

³⁶ Crowley, Tony. *Wars of Words: The Politics of Language in Ireland, 1537-2004*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

society. However, no matter how many insurrections were put down and the repeated attempts to stamp out Irish culture, the Irish spirit and desire for independence could never be destroyed.

In the year 1800, the British parliament passed a law that officially brought Ireland into the kingdom of Great Britain, which then became the United Kingdom, under the rule of the government in London. In exchange, Ireland would receive seats in Parliament and previous limitations and repressions of the Catholics of the territory would be removed.³⁷ However, the Irish were not satisfied with this arrangement and would clamor for more power on the local level (aka devolution) so that they could govern themselves more. The Irish would elect MPs (Members of Parliament) that would be drastically anti-Great Britain to show their protest. Eventually, the people of Ireland had had enough of British rule and started to become more militant and violent. In the heat of WW1, radical Irish nationalists thought they had their chance for freedom while the British were embroiled in a war with Germany. On April 24, 1916, the Irish nationalists marched on government buildings in major cities in Ireland, primarily Dublin, and declared Ireland to be a free and independent country that would be governed by free Irishmen. They were not able, however, to garner public support from the general populace and the Easter Uprising, as it came to be called, failed and its leaders were jailed and executed.³⁸

With the manner in which the rebellion was put down and the subsequent execution of the radical leaders, the moderate Irish nationalists were moved to pity for their comrades and became furious with the English over how they went about punishing the rebels.³⁹ They felt like there was a disparity in the amount of force needed for dealing with the rebels than with what

³⁷ Duerr, Glen. "Ireland under the British, and Irish Independence." Class Lecture, History and Politics of Great Britain and Canada, Cedarville, February 25, 2015.

³⁸ "The Easter Rising Begins in Dublin." History.com. Accessed March 22, 2015.

³⁹ "1916 Easter Uprising * Aftermath." BBC News.

would have been needed and/or reasonable. The British officials and police authorities realized that a bigger wave of resentment among the people could be detected among the people as now even moderate citizens became more and more outspoken against English rule. Rebel slogans could be heard everywhere, from football (soccer) matches to train stations across the region. The British tried to appease the rioters and nationalists by releasing prisoners that had been taken during the Uprising, but once again their attempts at reducing tensions only furthered nationalist sentiments. In 1918, the new ultranationalist party, Sinn Fein, swept aside the moderate Irish politicians in local and national offices. It was clear that the days of the British in Ireland were numbered. As a result of these sweeping nationalist political victories, the Sinn Fein MPs denounced the House of Commons in Parliament and created their own parliament in Dublin, the Dail Eireann. The British were then dragged into a guerilla war with Irish rebels and further British military action in Ireland, once again fueled more resentment from the local populace. The guerilla fighting lasted from 1919-1921 when the British realized that after hundreds of years, the Irish were not going to submit to English rule and their attempts at nationalist suppression had failed miserably. In 1922, the British and local Irish governments came to an agreement that Ireland was to be a free and independent country, though certain Protestant counties in Northwestern Ireland were allowed to vote to stay with Great Britain, which they accepted, but the violence that followed there is another story entirely.

The case study of Ireland just goes to show that forceful suppression sometimes has the opposite effect that the government may intend. Throughout the history of Britain's occupancy of Ireland, everything that the government attempted to do through force and coercion failed and/or backfired. From attempting to stamp out Irish culture and language to executing radical rebel leaders, the people of Ireland still refused to submit to British authority and when the

British attempted to tighten their grasp, the more moderate citizens slipped through their fingers. One factor that should be included in assessing the “suppression through force” method is international opinion/pressure. The reason that this was not mentioned in the case study is for two reasons. First, it was in the middle of WW1 and the powers that were allied together against Germany were more concerned with all of Britain’s effort being directed against Germany instead of the methods used to put down a distracting insurrection in Britain’s own territory. While a war was being fought, very few in the international community cared about how Britain was putting down the insurrection. Another reason is that one of the arrested individuals that was supposed to be executed for the Easter Uprising was spared because he was an American, Eamon de Valera.⁴⁰ Instead of angering the United States, Great Britain chose not to execute him in order to avoid international protest over the course of actions taken. Ironically enough, Valera would go on to be a member of Sinn Fein and helped play apart shaping Ireland once it became independent. So Great Britain was able to avoid international pressure, but the country in the next case was not able to achieve the same international silence.

The next case that will be looked at as to the effectiveness of violent/forceful suppression of a secessionist movement is the case of Russia in the Chechen Republic, also known as Chechnya. The Chechen people, recognized as a distinct people since the 17th century by Russia and the international community, were avid opponents of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus during the period 1818-1917, when Russia was still the command of the tsar. In 1858, the Russians defeated the Chechens who were aiming to establish an Islamic state. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, the people of Chechnya attempted to declare independence but were met with occupation from the Soviets, who later established the region as a semi-autonomous zone

⁴⁰ "Eamon De Valera (1882 - 1975)." BBC News. Accessed April 13, 2015. http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/de_valera_eamon.shtml.

under the overarching control of Moscow in 1924. In the mid-1930s, it became an autonomous republic within the Soviet Union, making most of the governing affairs left to the local/regional government in Chechnya. Chechens are predominantly Sunni Muslim, as well as some other cultural and religious beliefs. As for any group of people throughout history subdued by external rule or empire, external rule first by the brutal Russian Empire and then by the Soviets under the USSR, was unpopular and tenuous and trouble was going to happen soon.⁴¹

When World War II was at its peak and the Germans were attempting to conquer Russia, specifically the oil-rich Caucasus region, Chechen rebels allied themselves with the invading German in the hopes of ridding themselves of the oppressive and heavy-handed Soviets. In retaliation to this collaboration, Stalin deported many of the citizens of Chechnya to Central Asia and Siberia in 1944. The context of the deportation and hostility towards the Chechens is important, especially given the point of view of this case study in relation to the effectiveness of government suppression through violent/forceful means. During the course of the war, Hitler had attempted to foment rebellion in the Caucasus region by flying in saboteurs, assassins, spies, and agents who would attempt to spark an insurrection against the Russians. Stalin, seeing this as a clear threat to the USSR by the Nazis attempting to control ethnic groups within the USSR itself, reacted brutally and cruelly by deporting hundreds of thousands of Chechen men, women, and children to some of the most desolate and harsh regions of Russia in the East. The mass deportation of Chechen people, among others, is estimated in the range of 400,000 to 800,000 with perhaps 100,000 or more of these people dying due to the extreme conditions.⁴²

⁴¹ Shah, Anup. "*Crisis in Chechnya*." - Global Issues. September 4, 2004.

⁴² Vatchagaev, Mairbek. "*Remembering the 1944 Deportation: Chechnya's Holocaust*." The Jamestown Foundation. February 28, 2004.

In 2004, the many people in Europe, including the European Parliament, have come to this as one of the many genocides that Stalin had committed against the people of Eastern Europe/USSR, though that have not officially declared it to be such. Stalin thought that the Chechens would welcome Nazi-Germany in return for an independent Chechnya, a fear that was very reasonable at the time, given the circumstances, though one can never know for sure what Hitler had in mind. With the death of Stalin in 1953, deportees were brought back to the region in 1956, and the republic was reestablished in 1957. This legacy helps explain why Chechen nationalism has been more radical and anti-Russian than that of Russia's other Muslim ethnic minorities. The Chechens were also resentful of the Russia's in the 1990s when many ethnic groups in Eastern Europe were being granted independence but they remained under Russian authority.

All of these heavy-handed responses to attempted, or at least the planning of attempts, of Chechen independence only bred resentment to the Russian government, which was in no way, shape, or form similar or relatable to the culture and society of Chechnya. Furthermore, since the USSR was unable to stamp out divisive factors such as language, religion, and culture, it was easy for the populace to want to band together and allow nationalist sentiment to grow. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, certain regions were able/allowed to break away and become free and independent countries. Ingushetia, a region within Chechnya (though it would change again in 1992), voted for separation in a referendum and became an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation the following year. In 1991, General Dzhokhar Dudayev seized power in the capital Grozny led Chechnya's struggle for independence. Boris Yeltsin, the president of the newly formed Russian Federation, refused to acknowledge/recognize Chechnya's declaration of

independence, and sent in the army to restore order and to force the region to remain in Russia.⁴³ However, they quickly withdrew when they discovered that the Chechens were armed, organized, and prepared to fight for their freedom. The relationship between the Russian government and that of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev quickly, and unsurprisingly, turned into full-fledged war in the latter part of 1994. Russia then proceeded to invade Chechnya and a very bloody war ensued. This was Boris Yeltsin's first major military confrontation, and Russia's as well since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. He intended to completely destroy the separatist forces in order to show the world that Russia was still a power that could meet and overcome any and all challenges that might be faced. However, events did not unfold quite as President Yeltsin had planned. In fact, the situation turned into a humiliating disaster for Yeltsin, Russia, and Russia supposedly still strong military that had been inherited from the Soviet Union. The Chechen capital city of Grozny was completely destroyed and some 70-80,000 people died, mostly Chechen civilians. In 1996, Russia withdrew from the region defeated, bitter, and utterly demoralized. The aftermath of the 1994-96 war destroyed what control the Chechen government had over the militias/freedom fighters and local warlords fought to gain strength. In addition, the infrastructure of the "new country" had been completely and irreparably demolished and the country was in a state of complete chaos and disarray. The destroyed Chechen economy left armed but unemployed Chechens unchecked and only moderately loyal to the new government. To make matters even worse for the region and Russia, the war and atrocities committed by Russian troops majorly radicalized the rebels, who were already zealous enough and only made the situation much worse for everyone.

⁴³ Williams, Brian Glyn. "Commemorating *The Deportation*"; in *Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-1996 and 1999-2000 Russo-Chechen Wars*." *History and Memory* 12, no. 1 (2000)

All of this chaos and inability of the weak Chechen government to control the militias and warlords proved to be the ultimate downfall for the de facto free Chechnya. Some factions of Chechens rebels began to look towards expansion through the notion of “Irredentism,” which is the notion of a group/country claiming territory that belongs to them historically, but currently belongs to a separate state/governing entity.⁴⁴ Since the government was powerless to control most of the militias in breakaway region, incursions by Chechen rebels into the neighboring Dagestan, which belonged to Russia. Many Chechens considered this region to be a part of their ethnic homeland and their subsequent invasion caused a new Russian offensive in August 1999, to be launched against the breakaway Chechen Republic.⁴⁵ In the following month, the Russian government blamed Chechens for a series of apartment building bombings in Moscow and other Russian cities. These attacks left 300 people dead and re-energized anti-Chechen sentiments in Russia that had been dormant since the Russian’s humiliating defeat in 1996.

In the autumn of 1999, Russian forces easily captured Chechnya's northern plains. Intensive and indiscriminate artillery and air strikes against Grozny took their toll, and rebels retreated. Six days later, Russian Acting President Vladimir Putin - who had gained popularity partly because of his harsh policy in dealing with Chechnya - declared the battle for Grozny over. The rebels that still lived vowed to continue a guerilla war in Chechnya and elsewhere in Russia so long as Chechnya was under Russia’s fist, the effects of which they still remembered from the days of the Soviet Union.

The aftermath that followed was long and drawn out and was politically, financially, militarily, and diplomatically costly for Russia. Upon retaking control of Chechnya, a conflict

⁴⁴ Ambrosio, Thomas. *Irredentism Ethnic Conflict and International Politics*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001. pg 2.

⁴⁵ Smith, Donald. "Roots of Chechen Rebellion Embedded in Russian History." National Geographic. February 17, 2000. Accessed March 23, 2015.

that was not declared over until 2006 (some would even say 2009). Russian President Vladimir Putin had elected to a very harsh and severe approach to restoring order. He installed a loyal puppet, Ramzan A Kadyrov, to lead Chechnya with impunity in order to maintain control. The approaches that were taken included executions, torture, curfews, extensive military occupation, which still continues to the present day, and heavy press and media censorship according to a report by the Human Rights Watch organization.⁴⁶ To the current day, the situation in Chechnya is not much better and the hatred that many feel towards Russia and Putin's strongman, Kadyrov, has not gone away. In December of 2014, there was a terrorist attack in Grozny by Islamic militants, likely members ISIS or other terrorist organizations that have grown to hate Russia for many reasons, not the least of which maintaining Chechnya as a suppressed region in Russia and the violence and destruction that it has brought.⁴⁷ Many Chechens feel that they should be free and the international community has put immense pressure on Russia over the years to address how they are dealing with the situation in Chechnya. One thing is clear, the way in which Russia has maintained the region and dealt with the rebellious/secessionist nationalist within has not succeeded in silencing, pacifying or even remotely satisfying the desires of the local populace.

So is the suppression method effective? In terms of keeping the region within the country, it has met with a degree of success, simply because the region is kept within the country. However, if one were to answer the question by seeing how the approach maintains a peaceful region that is productive and beneficial to the country, then the answer is absolutely not. It is mankind's nature to rebel against authority and the way that the British dealt with the Irish rebels and the Russians dealt with the Chechen rebels, it only succeeded in strengthening the resolve of the

⁴⁶ *JUSTICE FOR CHECHNYA: The European Court of Human Rights Rules against Russia*. Human Rights Watch, 2007.

⁴⁷ Kramer, Andrew, and Neil Macfarquhar. "Fierce Attack by Islamist Militants in Chechen Capital Kills at Least 20." *The New York Times*. December 4, 2014.

ultranationalist and turned the more moderate nationals against the central governing body, and in the case in Russia, it turned the collective international community against them and also drew the attention of foreign terrorists to target them for the treatment of their Muslim brothers at the hands of the oppression regime in Moscow. So while forceful suppression may have worked in the past and still serves its purposes now, it is not the preferable or recommended choice to use in a modern, democratic society, especially when the people get to experience a little bit of freedom, they will react harshly when it is overtly and directly taken away from them and will only be resentful when the government commits atrocities against them.

It must be noted, however that there are severe limitations in order to properly evaluate this method. In addition to Russia not being the best example of a democracy, as it receives a low Freedom House rating for political rights and civil liberties,⁴⁸ the Ireland case study is from a long time ago when compared to the other case studies that have taken place. They are, however, the best examples that come close to the research criteria of studying the effects of military/forceful repression in Western, democratic states. This method is hard to judge and analyze effectively because it has become unpopular in the public and political eyes of the Western powers and is therefore rarely used. So while they may come close to being the best examples, the limitations are worth noting.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL METHOD

The third and last method that will be analyzed through case studies is the “Constitutional Method.” This method is when it is explicitly stated that it is illegal/unconstitutional for a region within a democratic country to secede. Also, even if there is no mention in a country’s laws

⁴⁸ "Russia." 2014. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/russia#.VStYxPnF9s4>.

and/or constitution, this method covers who actively combat a secessionist movement through means of forming governments that would not support it or legally work to stave off attempts of a region to leave. One thing that must be said about this method is that it does not attract a large amount of media attention, at least when compared to a military putdown or a regional independence referendum. This can be a good outcome from the point of view of the government because it does not attract large amounts of foreign attention and influence so that the case is not scrutinized when the government does not allow certain desires of large numbers of people being sympathized with across the globe. The two case studies that will be looked at in order to exemplify this method will be the situations of Belgium/Flanders and Spain/Catalonia.

The first region that will be studied is the region of Flanders, which makes up the northern half of the country of Belgium. The country itself is divided into two major regions, Dutch-speaking Flanders in the North and French-speaking Wallonia in the South. This does not include the French-speaking city of Brussels located in Flanders, which is difficult to properly sort out because of language, location, and international significance (as it is internationally considered the de facto capital of the EU⁴⁹). The international significance is a major issue as, even though it is in Flanders, it is home to the European Parliament, European Commission, Council of the European Union, and the European Council. However, setting the logistics of possible secession aside, one needs to look at the way in which the Belgian government has succeeded in preventing a popular secessionist sentiment in the Flanders. In order to understand the situation, it is important to look at the culture and society of the region and comprehend the reasons why they would wish to leave this small country to become an even smaller, yet independent country.

⁴⁹ Duerr, Glen. PhD. "*Belgium*." Lecture, History and Politics of Western Europe, Cedarville, March 17, 2014.

Belgium has been an independent country since independence from the Netherlands in 1831 A.D. They became independent by seceding, ironically enough, due to disputes with the Dutch government and formed their own kingdom. The country has a population of 11.2 million people,⁵⁰ 60% percent of that population lives in Flanders, which in turn takes about a little less than 45% of Belgium's land mass.⁵¹ The country is naturally divided into two main regions because of cultural and linguistic differences. The North speaks a Flemish dialect of Dutch and the South speaks a Walloon dialect of French. Some in the East speak German along the border. Because the country has linguistic differences, lines of separation can easily form along cultural lines, but that is just the beginning since separatist tensions go far deeper than just language and culture.

Flanders has been very successful economically in the recent decades, whereas Wallonia is very poor in comparison. Belgium is a country that has a very large debt, much in part to very generous welfare, retirement, and unemployment programs given out by the government. However, the disparity of incoming and outgoing contributions is one of the primary reason, if not the most important reason, for the Flemish people to want to leave the country. Since Flanders has been successful, they contribute more to the Belgian government in terms of taxes and most of that money goes to the much poorer Wallonia. It is estimated that Flanders loses between 4-10 billion Euros annually, depending on the year, due to taxes and wealth redistribution.⁵² Much of this disparity is caused by a number of factors. Much, if not all, of the major industries and companies are in the North, as well as the best trade and sea ports. The South only has business in coal mines and steel production but it really has no chance of

⁵⁰ *Belgium.*" WorldBank. January 1, 2013. Accessed March 23, 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/belgium>.

⁵¹ "*Living in Flanders, the Heart of Europe.*" VIB.org.

⁵² Duerr, Glen. "*Secessionism in Flanders.*" Lecture, History and Politics of Western Europe, Cedarville, March 14, 2014.

competing with North in terms of producing revenue and jobs. Unemployment is also very high in Wallonia as compared to Flanders and the welfare system that is in place does not encourage people to move where jobs are, but allows them to stay where they are and collect generous benefits provided to them by the government, much of it at the expense of the Flemish people and businesses.

All of this then goes to give rise to other reasons for the people of Flanders to want to become independent. Because of unemployment and lack of high-paying jobs, the public perception to the Flemish of the Walloon population is that they are lazy, entitled socialists content to leech off of money that is being redistributed away from the North.⁵³ Also, that the people of Wallonia are simply francophones and wish to be rid of the Dutch connections/culture in favor of a united Belgian identity that still has a strong French connection. This, in turn, gives the Walloon population the feeling that the Northerners look down upon them and think that they are lesser citizens, which is actually not an unfair summary of the views of many in Flanders. All of these feelings of ill will and dislike/distrust of fellow countrymen makes it easy for Flemish citizens to want to be independent and when enough people strongly agree on an issue in a democracy, political parties are bound to rise. Three separate political parties that are all Dutch-speaking have risen to support Flemish independence, even though they disagree on many other ideological points. In fact, when people look at Belgian politics and political parties, the first thing they divide the parties into are language groups, not ideology. Even the non-secessionist parties are separated by language, partly by necessity and partly by demand/public expectation as to where in the country they are so as to not turn people hostile to them for speaking the language of the other people in the part of the country. Needless to say, with all of these political

⁵³ Charlemagne. "A Model of Mistrust." *The Economist*. June 12, 2010.

parties on a competitive level with all the other parties, it makes it challenging come election time.

The *major* political parties of the country in order of most to least current seats held in the Belgian parliament as of the 2014 federal elections are as follows: the New Flemish Alliance (Center-right) a Dutch-speaking, pro-independence party with 33 seats; the Socialist Party (Left) a French-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 23 seats; the Reform Movement (Center-right) a French-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 20 seats; the Christian Democratic & Flemish (Center-right) a Dutch-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 18 seats; the Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Center) a Dutch-speaking, pro-Belgian/pro-union party with 4 seats; the Socialist Party (the Flemish Left) a Dutch-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 13 seats; the Humanist Democratic Center (Center) a French-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 9 seats; the Greens (Flemish Green) a Dutch-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 6 seats; Ecolo (French Green) a French-speaking, pro-Belgian party with 6 seats; and lastly Vlaams Belang (far-right/ultranationalists) a Dutch-speaking, rabidly pro-independence party with 3 seats.⁵⁴ The point of listing these results is to show just how complicated the Belgian political system is, especially since the political parties need to form coalitions in order to form a government. In fact, it took 4 months after the elections to form a government. The New Flemish Alliance received the most votes and therefore had the first chance to form a governing coalition but was unable to create a large enough coalition to obtain a majority because the other parties knew that this region would want to devolve more power to the regional level and start to turn the country to a confederal system, which could realistically lead to a bid for independence. Power has been devolved to the regional

⁵⁴ "Election Resources: Federal Elections in Belgium - Chamber of Representatives Results Lookup." Electionresources.org. May 25, 2014.

levels since the 1970s, but more power is desired by the Flemish people to be given to them from the federal government.

Charles Michel of the Reform Movement party was eventually selected to be the prime minister through a coalition of 4 parties: the Reform Movement, New Flemish Alliance, Christian Democratic & Flemish party, and the Flemish Liberals and Democrats. This ended a four-month deadlock in which there was no government in place. Despite an overwhelming victory of the Dutch-speaking N-VA nationalists, some of the potential coalition partners did not trust the separatists to have the interests of Belgium at heart in order to run the country properly.⁵⁵ The four-party coalition will back the business-friendly policies that the N-VA had previously attempted to convince the former socialist-led government to implement, but to no avail. With the socialists finally removed from power, the government will be planning to implement austerity measures and cut and raise around 8 billion euros in order to reach a balanced budget by 2018. The government will center on the economic recovery from the crisis and the more nationalistic N-VA desires will go largely unaddressed due to the nature of the current governing coalition.⁵⁶

The rise of Michel is surprising since the May 25 elections yielded a major victory for the center-right wing N-VA party in northern Flanders. Though the coalition talks took over four months, which fell far short of the record 541 days of stalemate following the previous elections, because the parties in previous years had been unwilling to negotiate in order to form a government that would ensure the survival and success of the state of Belgium and not to form a government that could potentially tear the country apart.

⁵⁵ Bartunek, Robert-Jan. "Flemish Separatist Ends Bid to Form Belgian Government." Reuters. June 25, 2014.

⁵⁶ Casert, Raf. "Belgium Swears in New Prime Minister Charles Michel." The Independent. October 11, 2014.

So once again, one needs to look at the situation and ask how effective has the Belgian approach been. In truth, the Belgians have been remarkably successful. True, the country has incredibly steep political divides and the cultures have grown quite resentful of each other, but it stops there. There have been no attempts by the Flemish people to secede forcefully from the country. The government has not cracked down on or censored separatist sentiments. The people of Belgium, while unhappy perhaps, are content with letting the democratic system run its course. In addition, the democratic nature of Belgium and modern Western Europe in general gives the people a sense of hope that things can change peaceably and democratically all while legal under the law. While some powers have been devolved to the regional level, it has not been quite as sudden or dramatic as it has been in Scotland so the people are not shocked or suddenly given more freedom than they have had previously. While secessionist/nationalist tensions do run deep and affect the daily lives of Belgian citizens, the chances of an independent Flanders looks like it is still a distant dream in the eyes of many Flemish people, but they are content to let democracy run its course and that the rule of law and the system of government continue on for the continuation of peace that they have long enjoyed.

The second case study that will now be analyzed is the situation of Catalonia in Spain. Catalonia is a triangular region in Spain's north-east corner along its Mediterranean border with France, which is separated by the Pyrenean Mountains. In fact, 7.3 million people of Spain's 45.3 million strong population live there, which is roughly 16%. Most of the region's population lives in Barcelona, it is an immensely important political and economic hub for the region and Spain as a whole and it is a popular European travel destination. However, as massive a tourist attraction Catalonia is, it is not what makes Catalonia so valuable. Much of Spain's manufacturing (mechanical, textile and chemical), food processing, and metalworking businesses

are located there and the region comprises around nearly 19% of Spain's GDP.⁵⁷ The GDP per capita is higher than the European Union average. This makes the region the main contributor to the Spanish economy as it does considerably better than the rest of the country which is, barring some wealthier areas, struggling due to the troubling economic times in Europe. As in Flanders, the feeling that the region is being held back economically by being forced to pay for much of the rest of the country is a main factor in wanting to secede from Spain. However, it is not the only reason. One must learn the history of the Catalan people first, in order to properly understand the sentiments that they feel.

Catalonia has been part of Spain since the 15th century, when King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile married and united their realms. The union began without much happening initially. Catalan retained many of their own institutions and ways of life. The politics did not change that much. And the Catalan people felt comfortable knowing that one of their own sat on the Spanish throne. Over time, however, the region became more and more integrated into Spain. This did not change for a long time as the Spanish Empire was successful and the most powerful nation in Europe at its height. However, when the Empire began to collapse, the strength of the Spanish government began to wane and the economy started a massive downturn. Throughout the history of secession, economic downturns is one of the most likely reasons for the resurgence of nationalist sentiments as they are no longer content since the government that used to be foreign is no longer powerful and successful and the people feel like they would now be better off under their own governance.

In the 19th century, a renewed sense of Catalan identity began to sweep across the people of the region and the desire for political autonomy and even secession grew and grew since the

⁵⁷ "OECD Review of Higher Education in Regional and City Development: Catalonia, Spain." OECD.org.

government in Madrid no longer satisfied the Catalan people. This nationalist sentiment was not just a desire for greater autonomy and power, but it also brought about a renewed sense of Catalonia as an entity. Language, art, and literature that had been unique to Catalan but lost since unification with Spain was on the rise and the people began to believe that they were a unique people, deserving to be free and deserving of their own country. When Spain became a republic in 1931, Catalonia was soon given broad autonomy, as was much of the rest of the Spanish provinces. During the bloody Spanish Civil War, Catalonia was a key Republican stronghold the championed freedom and democracy against the tyranny of the autocratic, fascist dictator, General Francisco Franco. The war raged on all over Spain, but the fighting was particularly severe in Catalonia and when Barcelona fell to Gen. Franco's forces in 1939, the end of Spanish resistance to the fascist forces began to subside and the country submitted to his rule.⁵⁸

Under Franco, autonomy was revoked and Catalan nationalism was severely repressed and use of the Catalan language restricted. However, as one might have already learned from reading the case studies of Chechnya and Ireland, the tighter a government tries to grip on restive region, the more that region slips through its fingers. For all of the means that Franco attempted to stifle nationalist sentiment, that same sentiment kept the people strong and helped them to resist the attempts to wipe out their culture. One the ways that the Catalan culture survived was through soccer. As mentioned before, when discussing the lecture "*Soccer and Secessionism*," (Duerr) the rivalry between Barcelona vs. Real Madrid is one of the greatest in sports history. The reason for this is its origins. Since Franco banned the Catalan culture from being openly displayed/encourage, the people of Catalonia had to find a way around that. The team of Barcelona became more than a team, it became a symbol of Catalonia and it was during the

⁵⁸ "*Catalonia Profile - Overview*." BBC News. January 15, 2015.

games between Barcelona and Real Madrid (the team that the people associated with Franco) that the soccer fans were the most nationalistic they could be at the time. Under the guise of being soccer fans chanting slogans about their team, the people of Catalonia were able to express their culture and language. Even though Franco did not like this, there was little he could do to control the hooliganism of the Catalonian soccer fans. In fact, a slogan was born out of this sentiment that is now engraved in the Barcelona stadium: “Mes que un Club,” a Catalan phrase which translates into “More than a Club,” as the team had become more than a soccer team, but the very embodiment of Catalan culture. The soccer matches, and other factors, helped Catalan culture endure Franco’s dictatorship when he died in 1976.

On June 15, 1977, after the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, Spaniards elected a new, government with the authority to write a constitution for Spain to set the laws and freedoms for the Spanish people. It was the first freely contested parliamentary election in Spain since February 15, 1936. Politicians exhorted the Basques and Catalans to speak their banned languages in celebration of their new freedom.⁵⁹ However, many Catalans in the present rue the day that part of the Constitution was constructed, worded, and approved by the Spanish people through popular vote. The reason that the Catalan people are in the position they currently is because of Section II of the Spanish Constitution which states, “*The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards; it recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed and the solidarity among them all.*”⁶⁰ What this says is that the while the minorities and nationalities of the country will be respected and be allowed a significant amount of autonomy, the region may not secede from the central government to form their own country

⁵⁹ Meisler, Stanley. "Spain's New Democracy." ForeignAffairs.com. October 1, 1977.

⁶⁰ "Constitution of Spain." Congreso.es. December 27, 1978.

but as one who has already studied the cases of Quebec and Scotland, devolution will not be enough to satisfy a populace for very long when they believe themselves to be free and separate of the country of which they are currently a part. Nevertheless, the Spanish people of 1978 approved the Constitution and it has remained as the country's constitution to the present day.

The current situation in Catalonia has only recently reached the tensions it is currently at due to the economic downturn that happened in Europe in the mid-2000s. Spain was also one of the worst countries hit by the global recession. The Catalans, as already stated, have felt like they are bearing an unfair burden for the rest of the country and that they feel like they give Madrid more than they receive in benefits and services, the same government that they believe got the country into the mess in the first place (Catalonia Profile-BBC). Regardless of how the situation started, the matter has now become enlarged and now many of the Catalan people want to be free, but the central government has declared it to be illegal and impossible since their Constitution clearly states that secession is not allowed. However, this does not stop the people from wanting to be independent even though the Spanish government passed extensive legislation devolving power to the regional level that granted the area a high degree of autonomy. This was known as the Statute of Autonomy, 2006.⁶¹ At Barcelona soccer games, one can see many flags that represent a free Catalonia as well as signs and banners proclaiming the region to be free. In 2009, the Catalan political parties that championed independence held an unofficial independence referendum that resulted in a 94% approval for independence, but mainly because there was roughly only a 30% voter turnout. The results were ignored by the central government and dismissed as irrelevant. In addition, the low turnout was, at best, an embarrassment to the pro-independence parties and it would sometime before they would try again.

⁶¹ Duerr, Glen. "*Secessionism in Catalonia and the Basque Country*." Lecture, History and Politics of Western Europe, Cedarville, April 7, 2014.

The next try came in 2014, when the Catalonia Parliament this time officially submitted a request to the central government to authorize an independence referendum and actually set a date to hold the vote. The Spanish government once again declared the vote illegal, irrelevant, and unconstitutional. They considered it to be categorized as “political propaganda” that would result in nothing substantial.⁶² The Catalan people went ahead with the vote and this time a little less than 50% voter turnout was achieved and the result received was an 80% approval rate for independence/ greater autonomy.⁶³ Still, nothing happened and both the region and central government went on with their daily routines, despite the protest of Catalan officials. The government maintained its position and clearly stated that independence was not an option and neither was an official independence referendum that might not even result in full independence.⁶⁴ It certainly does not look like Catalonia, for all of its overwhelming desire, will become independent anytime soon. Although it must be noted that pressure, as can be seen, is increasing. It will be important to wait and observe what happens later on in the future.

Now it is time to ask the question for the third time, “How effective is this method at stopping secession?” The answer to this issue is pretty clear. The method of working through legal means in Belgium has the political parties working to hamper/temper separatist sentiment, to the point where they will not even have a government before allowing one of the nationalist parties to lead a governing coalition, and the constitutional route has worked well in Spain as the independence movement there, despite its domestic support and rhetoric, is no closer to being independent than they were in 1978 when the constitution was first written and adopted. This method is peaceful, which should dissuade people who detest violence and military intervention.

⁶² Walsh, James. "Catalan Independence Poll: What Happens Next?" theguardian. November 11, 2014.

⁶³ "Catalonia Vote: 80% Back Independence - Officials." BBC News. November 10, 2014.

⁶⁴ Frayer, Lauren. "Catalonia Votes For Independence; Spain Says It Won't Happen." NPR. November 10, 2014.

It is also not inflammatory, though it is incredibly frustrating, to the local populace because the government does not make martyrs with this system or enrage people to the point to take up arms against the government. Lastly, this method is extremely effective in dodging public opinion and pressure for holding referendum since it has a democratically appointed system in which the country is run and maintained. Also, other countries around the world, democratic or not, are careful in calling on another to allow for independence or independence referendums from being given because many of the countries in the world also have restive regions that desire to be free and no country wants to look like a hypocrite or inadvertently encourage secessionist sentiment at home by helping separatists abroad.⁶⁵ This model certainly has proven effective in the long term and seems to still be holding up presently in the two countries.

CHRISTIAN/MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Theological

All the approaches and methods that have been discussed have been based on a purely politically realistic measures. Now it is time to ask, "How should a Christian in government deal with a secessionist movement within the country?" It is very important, that in a democratic society, especially one that was founded on moral ideals, that morality and ethics be taken into account. A Christian must look at a number of areas when trying to deal with a separatist movement. His or her approach must be based on how the three methods that have been discussed relate to Scripturally based government. All these factors must be properly addressed

⁶⁵ Abend, Lisa. "Why Catalonia Isn't Likely to Leave Spain Anytime Soon." TIME.com. September 28, 2012.

before a Christian leader in government decides on what course of action should be taken against the secessionists.

First, one should look at historical examples as to how God-fearing and/or Christian leaders governed their lands and how they responded to various acts of rebellion and discord among the people. The first instance of a formal secession can be found in 1 Kings 12. After the death of Solomon, Rehoboam, his son, became king over Israel and Judah. However, during Solomon's reign, a man named Jeroboam had desired to become king over Israel and upon Solomon's death led ten of the twelve tribes of Israel away from the kingdom of David and Solomon and the ten tribes made him their king. All of this was after Israel had asked the new king to be more lenient on them than Solomon was. Rehoboam said that he would not listen to the tribes' demands and would actually be harsher than his father. Because of this and the fact that he did not even listen to their demands, the ten Northern tribes seceded and became their own country under Jeroboam. While Rehoboam did not try to stop the people from seceding, it must be noted that the threat of harsh treatment and violent repression only drove the people away. Had the king listened to his older advisors, who said that if he would comply with their demands, the people would have been satisfied. It is interesting to interpret this as his advisors suggesting that he gives up some of his tight government control of the tribes/regions as a means of satisfying the people. Hypothetically, this could be an argument that these Old Testament advisors felt devolution was the best course of action.

Another example from Biblical times would be when Israel attempted to secede from Rome in 66 A.D. The Jewish people revolted and even succeeded in violently throwing the Romans out of Jerusalem. However, Rome responded in force and crushed the Israelite nationals so completely and harshly that they even scattered the survivors across the empire, allowing only

a few to stay. So one can see that the violent suppression method worked against the secessionists and that God did not protect the Jewish people, who believed that He was on their side the whole time. This could be interpreted that God allowed the use of force because His people were decimated and even the Holy City and the temple, God's House, was burned to the ground. So while much of these historical examples is up to debate and interpretation, one cannot deny the results. On one hand, the people who had nonviolently expressed their demands were met with harsh words and ignored whereas the wise men of the court advised negotiations/acquiescing to the demands of the tribesmen. On the other hand, when God's people rebelled violently to the Romans, God allowed His people to be annihilated and their city burned to the ground. Much of what the Bible teaches concerns the lives of the people more so than what God says to the governments. But what exactly does the Bible say about government?

The Bible, the New Testament in particular, teaches how the Christian should act and it still applies today. Probably one of the most commonly cited passages when it comes to Christians and their relationship with government is Luke 20:25 and Romans 13. The verse in Luke says that the Christian is to give to the government what is theirs. This is in reference to taxes and obedience in the cases when the government would not be commanding the people to sin against God. In Romans 13, Paul states that God has set up the government and that they are to be God's administrators of justice on Earth. He goes on to say in Romans 13:2 that whoever rebels against the government has rebelled against that which God has placed in authority, thereby inviting to themselves all consequences and punishments that the government may inflict to punish the rebels. So from this verse it says that God has allowed for government to respond to rebellion to those who rebel and that the government may inflict upon them what they will in accordance with their laws and systems. If one were to relate this to the methods discussed, the

chapter implies that the government can choose how it wants in terms of responding to violent rebellion with violence and nonviolent rebellion with legal action. Devolution is an act of benevolence and generosity in comparison to the other two options and the government is by no means obligated to respond in such a manner.

Another verse that a Christian in government should consider is Matthew 5:1-12. In this passage, Jesus is preaching that the meek, merciful, and peaceful will be blessed and rewarded for their deeds. While this is directed to the individual, it could potentially be interpreted as instruction to individuals that could be in government formulating policy and making decisions. As already stated, the devolution method is the most peaceful form of dealing with secessionism and is quite a generous position that the government does not need to take. Military suppression is certainly not peaceful nor merciful and the legal approach would not be the kindest or humblest thing for the government to do. If one were to look at it from this point of view, then devolution would be the preferred moral option for the government to utilize, though not obligatory.

Now that some of the primary verses of the Bible on the matter have been discussed, one should also look to see what different theologians and political philosophers have said on the subject. First, the Protestant theologian Martin Luther expressed his thoughts on rebellion in a famous, or infamous depending on who one were to ask, letter that he wrote to the German princes during the Peasant Rebellion of 1525. In this rebellion, the peasant classes of Germany rebelled due to extremely harsh and stressful lives and working/living conditions to which they were subjected. The princes imposed heavy laws, restrictions, and taxes among the people to the point where they could no longer take it and rebelled against the system to free themselves from

the oppression under which they lived.⁶⁶ The rebellion then took a turn for the worse and the people started murdering, stealing, and burning anyone who came across their path that did not agree with them or join them. This included many Catholics, who they viewed as religious oppressors who took advantage of the people. Ironically, some of the rebels were inspired by Luther's teaching to resist the Catholic Church's attempt at control and extortion of the people. Monasteries were burned and many innocent people, Catholic and otherwise, were butchered by the mob. In addition, much of this was done in God's name to signify the end of the oppression of the Catholics.

Martin Luther could not sit idly by and watch this. He carefully thought about what would a just response be and how should the government respond, which it was hesitant and weary to do because of how popular the uprising was. This letter was entitled, "*Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants.*"⁶⁷ In this letter, Luther argues that these peasants had committed a number of crimes that warranted a harsh response by the government. They had murdered innocents, stolen goods, and burned churches and the property of others. They had violated their oaths of subservience to the princes. Lastly, they were doing much of this in the name of God. Luther wrote that because of Romans 13, the government not only had God's approval, they had a moral obligation to exercise their God-given power of the sword and stop these rebels and bring the countryside back under control. With the support of Luther in his letter, the princes felt like they now had a religious and a somewhat political permission, because of many of rebels had looked to Luther for guidance, basis with which to respond. The rebellion ended only after over one hundred thousand peasants were killed in the revolt. The princes

⁶⁶ Sea, Thomas F. "The German Princes' Responses to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525." *Central European History* 40, no. 2 (2007): 219-40.

⁶⁷ Luther, Martin. "*Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants Martin Luther.*" Memphis.edu. May, 1525.

agreed to clemency and to lighten up their laws and taxes on the people in exchange for their peaceful return to everyday life. While the rebellion was a terrible ordeal, a precedent had now been set by a revered theologian as to how a government should deal with rebellion, though it should be noted that this response was only advocated after the rebels had resorted to violence and murder. In addition, this was also a social rebellion rather than an attempt at secession. Even though the scope of this scenario is limited, it is still a valuable source of information and deliberation on the topic of government responses.

Another famous theologian that discusses about the power and authority of government is John Calvin. In his fourth book, from *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin devotes a great deal of time discussing civil government. The part that relates to the discussion on the topic of rebellion/devolution, Calvin says this⁶⁸:

“Although the Lord takes vengeance on unbridled domination, let us not therefore suppose that that vengeance is committed to us, to whom no command has been given but to obey and suffer.”

In this, Calvin means that the Lord will judge the government on how it has governed and how faithfully is carried out his will. An unjust government will be punished severely and the Lord will avenge the abuse of power and the negligence of duty. However, he states that this vengeance should not be accomplished through the people. The people, according to Calvin, are commanded to endure and suffer, if need be, the injustices and burdens of an unjust government. He does, however, write a caveat to his statement:

“I speak only of private men. For when popular magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings... So far am I from forbidding these officially to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannise and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently

⁶⁸ Calvin, John, and Henry Beveridge. "20. Of Civil Government." In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 4. London: Arnold Hatfield, 1599.

betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians.”

Here, Calvin is saying that the people who are already in government, lower ranking officials/politicians, do have a Biblical authority to change the government and to overrule the current government/governing policy. Relating this to modern, democratic settings, it would be the equivalent of Congress overriding the president or impeaching him, should the president be acting extremely unjustly/illegally. The important thing to take away from Calvin’s beliefs and statements though is that the common man/individual has no right to rebel, disobey, or leave the government even if they feel as though they are being unjustly, provided the government is not telling them to sin. The government has every right to rule over the people and treat them as they see fit as it is anointed by God.

A third well known and influential theologian that has written on a Biblical role of government is William Tyndale. Tyndale writes in his book, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*⁶⁹, on how the citizens should treat the government and how the government should rule its citizens. On the issue of the relationship from the view of the people, he writes that the people are to subject themselves to the authority of government. He stresses to a greater degree than Calvin did that the people are to obey whom the Lord has anointed to rule/govern in His place on Earth. Those who rebel will rightfully incur the wrath and the sword with which the government would respond. However, unlike Calvin, Tyndale writes, in his address to the government, that the rulers need to remember to adhere to strong moral/Biblical principles when it comes to ruling. The people in power are to rule in a manner that would carry out God’s will on Earth, be it showing mercy or punishing evil in all forms in manners that befit the crime. However,

⁶⁹ Tyndale, William, and Thomas Russell. "OBEDIENCE TO KINGS, PRINCES, AND RULERS; DUTY OF KINGS, JUDGES, AND OFFICERS." In "The Obedience of a Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern," 7-14; 23-37. Year of 1831 Edition ed. London, England: Thomas Nelson, 1528.

Tyndale notes and warns the government that if they do not rule justly, they will stoke resentment in the people. If this trend of provoking the people and the continued abuse of power goes on, the people will rebel and they will have failed in carrying out their duties and have failed to rule in a just manner, regardless of the fact that he still views rebellion as wrong. In this way, Tyndale is being a pragmatist. While not condoning rebellion, if a government continuously acts unjustly, there will be a rebellion and the government and unity of the country will be threatened.

There was a common theme in studying the works of some of the most famous on the relationship between Christianity and government. Most Christian thinkers throughout history have all acknowledged that the government has total authority and has a right to respond in whatever way they deem necessary. In addition, almost all of the great Christian thinkers have said that the people are to endure what they may perceive injustice, unless of course the government is forcing them to sin. But one thing that could help answer the question as to what is the best response of a government to a secessionist movement is that Luther and Tyndale both stressed is that the government is to rule fairly and to carefully pay attention to and respond to the needs of the people so that they may rule/govern peacefully and in a manner that glorifies He who put them into power in the first place.

Philosophical

One famous/influential thinker that has spoken on the power and scope of the government is John Locke. Though not a theologian, Locke is most likely the single most influential thinker that helped shaped what the Western, democratic world has become. He focused more on government theory, but most of his work was inspired from a moral standpoint that was influenced by his theology on God and government. Locke stated that because of all

men being created equally by God everyone been granted certain rights that no one infringe upon.⁷⁰ These rights are the famous rights to “Life, Liberty, and Property.” Locke, as is common knowledge to most who study politics, believed that the government is only in power by the consent of the people. Should the people no longer to consent to be under the control of the current government, due to a breach of trust or responsibility by the government, the people should break away from the government and form a new one. However, Locke does state that the government does have the authority over life and death in cases appropriate/just responses to the crime.⁷¹ Locke would not view the use of that power as appropriate when dealing with people who desperately want their freedom and do it through just means, not through terrorism or acts of barbarity like the IRA or ETA, when comparing it to somewhat recent examples. Locke’s view of self-determination is instrumental in determining an appropriate response to separatists and one cannot ignore the influence the Locke’s works and ideologies have on the democratic and modern societies of Western Europe and the US and Canada.

Another great political thinker that some might find as a surprise when discussing how a modern, democratic government should respond to rebellion/secessionism is Otto von Bismarck.⁷² Bismarck, as most historians and political scientists would be quick to note, was a profoundly strong and notorious realist politician in Germany from many years up until shortly before the First World War. He served the Kaiser Wilhelm I of Prussia, Europe’s last strong (“absolute”) monarch. In a time during the rise of socialism and the further entrenchment of democracy in Europe, Bismarck knew that Prussia needed to do something to keep the people happy under the current system of government. In order to prevent a rebellion that would change the government or break the newly formed union of German states that Prussia had worked so

⁷⁰ Tuckness, Alex. "*Locke's Political Philosophy*." Stanford University. November 9, 2005.

⁷¹ Simmons, A. John. "Locke on the Death Penalty." *Philosophy* 69, no. 270 (1994): 471-77.

⁷² "*Otto Von Bismarck*." History.com. <http://www.history.com/topics/otto-von-bismarck>.

hard to put together, Bismarck cleverly came up a policy of incentives to give to the people to keep them content. As chancellor of the new Germany, Bismarck was entrusted by the Kaiser to consolidate the government's domestic power and so in order to dissuade the people from demanding socializing, Bismarck set up what many considered to be the first state welfare program. "In the 1880s Bismarck set aside his conservative impulses to counter the socialists by creating Europe's first modern welfare state, establishing national healthcare (1883), accident insurance (1884) and old age pensions (1889)" (History.com). By doing this, he basically "out-socialized" the socialists so the people would have no reason to want to revolt. If one were to think on it, Bismarck was doing this to appear generous, while still maintaining realist and shrewd goals. By doing this, he was not championing the rights and needs of the common man, he was merely "bribing" the people so that they would be content. In many ways, this is similar to the Canadian attempts at appeasing the people of Quebec. So even though he was not coming at it from a "moral" point of view, he correctly theorized that with this social welfare state philosophy, he was able to prevent dissention before it ever really began. So philosophically, coming at it from this angle, the notion of economic incentives, though not really devolution, has had a successful precedent that governments can look back on and possibly consider for their own situation.

In conclusion, when it comes to the actual act of governance and the implementation of policies by officials, the New Testament of the Bible does not deal as much with Christians with governmental authority and how the government should treat/relate to the people. However, the Bible does talk of many cultural instructions. God is to remain first and that Christians are to do "all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31b). This includes governmental work since that verse says the world "all," especially when dealing with a restive population in a particular

region that would not be happy with the central government. But with the many different cultures and situations, there is no one best method to deal with secessionist movements. If one were to take the approach of Luther, if the secessionists were violent and disrupting the peace in a violent way, then the moral approach would be to forcefully repress and put down any notion of rebellion in order to preserve the peace and lives of the people. Locke argues, however, that the people have a right and even a “moral” one to throw off oppressive governments so long as the people do not resort to criminal activities. If one were to apply it to most of the cases that have been analyzed, then it would seem that the most moral approach would be to adhere to the needs of the people and to devolve power and address their political, economic, and social concerns accordingly. However, the Bible does say that while the path of peace is preferred to anything else, it is still permissible before God for the government to carry on and preserve itself since God did set in place the government and nothing in this world happens without His consent or command. So while the people of the West may live in a democratic society and they have the freedom and the ability to change aspects of the government, that same government still has its God-given sword and it knows how to wield it.

CONCLUSION

When you compare and contrast the three methods, along with looking at the literature and academic research that has been done in the past it seems clear as to which of the three methods work the best. Devolution has had some considerable success in terms keeping regions within a country, but to what end? Quebec has almost become independent twice and still resent much of Canadian and the government, which provides them which considerable economic and welfare benefits, considering how much they actual contribute to the country. In addition to that,

the rest of the country has been known to feel resentment to Quebec for the money that is sent there to the point many people want to kick Quebec out of the country. Then one just needs to look at Scotland. Scotland has been receiving more and more power from the British government for the past few dozen years and they still almost became independent in the autumn of 2014. The only reason they stayed was because they were afraid they would lose economic benefits that they had been receiving from the UK as well as being satisfied with the Prime Minister's promise to devolve even more power. At what point does Scotland become a de facto independent state? In order to see if devolution truly does work, it will require more time to see what regions like Scotland will do in the future.

It would also seem that the forceful/violent suppression method is the worst approach of the three. In the case of Ireland, the British attempted to stifle and force out Irish culture and then forcefully dominate the land, which only increased the resolve of the Irish people. Who then proceeded to grow more restless and hostile when the British attempted to put down rebellions and give out harsh sentences to the rebels. In the end, everything the British did in Ireland in their attempt to control the population had the opposite effect and they eventually lost the island, with the exception of six counties in the North. Russia's attempt at the forceful control of Chechnya, while keeping the region within the country, is not a good option in a true democracy because of the terrible price that was paid only to receive an uneasy and unstable result. The amount of lives lost and the hatred and terrorism that was caused by Russia's harsh methods is too great a price for a country in the West to pay for all moral, diplomatic, political, and humanitarian reasons. The diplomatic price alone that a Western, democratic power would pay would turn that country into a social pariah for a long time. The aftereffects are another thing. There will be no healing for a long time, if at all. The scars of Chechnya may never heal and

Russia may reap the rewards of terrorism, hatred, resentment, security, and repair for years to come.

Lastly, the legal/constitutional method has proven extremely effective in all areas except one, which is the fact that it does not solve the separatist sentiment, it goes more along the thought of ignoring it. But even then, both cases have shown that pursuing the legal way of preventing secession has been successful and effective for decades and show no signs of letting up anytime soon, regardless of political bluster. It does not look like the separatists of Belgium will be able to lead a coalition even when they the general election very convincingly because the other political parties are willing to band together and support the country rather than a particular region. Also, the secessionist Catalans do not look like they are going to vote on independence anytime soon because of a democratic document that is legally and justly enforced by a fairly elected government. As much as they might not like it and however unfair it may not be to the citizens of Catalonia, they probably will not see a change in the government's attitude anytime soon and nor can they expect to receive international support. From this point of view, it seems clear that this is the preferred method of dealing with secessionist movements within a Western, democratic country.

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